



# ANALYTICAL STUDY OF GENDER BASED OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF BHOPAL DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

In the wake of Universal Elementary Education, the stress of Upper Primary teachers have increased, due to which increase in student enrollment, additional administrative tasks, time pressures and unrealistic deadlines. The aim of the present study is to determine the Occupational Stress level of teachers working at upper primary level. One hundred and five Government upper primary school teachers from Bhopal District were chosen as sample by using random sampling technique and administered with an Occupational Stress Rating Scale developed by researcher. The statistical technique was employed to calculate the Mean, SD and percentage and the obtained results were analyzed accordingly. In the present study, Occupational Stress was evident in both male and female teachers, but stress level was found to be higher in male teachers. Teacher stress associated with Work Overload, Strenuous Working Conditions and Role Conflict was more in males while female teachers were found to be more stressed with Professional Distress and Impoverished Relations dimensions of occupational stress. This research also focuses on the need for recognizing and identifying the major stressors in teachers, so that management committees and policy makers find a way to minimize occupational stress in upper primary school teachers.

**KEYWORDS:** Occupational Stress, Upper Primary School Teachers, Stressor.

## INTRODUCTION:

The effectiveness of an educational system largely depends upon active, resourceful and competent teachers. Teachers with sound psychological and physical well-being, contribute efficiently but unhealthy competition and fragmented demands of the teaching, lead to overwhelming pressure on teachers, which further enhances the mental stress and strain in them. Teacher stress has been a concern in educational research for several decades. The profession of teaching needs sound psychological state of mind, but when occupational stress put psycho-physical effects on a person, it definitely influence his/her work efficiency and performance. Kyriacou (1987) who has carried out various studies on teacher stress, defines teacher stress as the experience of unpleasant feelings such as depression, anger, worry, irritableness and tension which are formed as a result of working as a teacher. Several factors like inappropriate working conditions, job dissatisfaction, heavy workload, job insecurity, unhealthy competition etc. are the stress producing factors for the teachers. Teaching is a human service profession, therefore in order to teach effectively, the teachers must possess sound mental health, enthusiasm and satisfaction within job.

Teachers working within the upper primary school systems confront multiple stressors on a daily basis that results in varying levels of occupational stress in them. Factors like poor student behavior ranging from low levels of student motivation to their misbehavior, along with poor relationship with the administration and colleagues results in occupational stress. The major stressors include: work related demands, role related factors, pace and intensity of change in the workplace and lack of organizational support (Sabherwal, et.al. 2015). In addition to this, teachers generally struggle with their poor prospects relating to pay, promotion and career development which also add to their stress.

As such occupational stress is unavoidable and it adversely affects the member of every institution. Researchers (Forlin, 2001) viewed teacher stress as an interactive procedure that happens within teachers and their teaching environment, thereby leading to excessive demands being placed on them and ultimately resulting in physiological and psychological distress.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Lots of work have been done on different stressors that causes occupational stress in teachers.

Sabherwal, et.al. (2015), have tried to find out the occupational stress among faculty members in higher education institution and the results showed that the determinants of stress among the administrators are numerous and varied, with compilation of results, time pressures, lack of infrastructure, students' indiscipline and poor pay prospects as a very high ranked stressors. Along with that, findings also revealed that the administrators experienced on an average a low to moderate level of stress and this did not negatively affect their performance.

Hasan, A. (2014), found that the primary school teachers are highly stressed. Moreover, the private primary school teachers have also found to be highly stressed in comparison to their government primary school teachers counterparts.

Chaly, et.al. (2014), reported that out of 504 software professionals and 504

school teachers, for 23% of software professionals and 85% of schoolteachers, stress was not a problem in their life. 71% of software professionals and 15% of schoolteachers were in moderate Stress level. For 6% of software professional stress was a Problem in their life.

Jeyaraj, S.S. (2013), worked on government and aided higher secondary school teachers, with the sample of 185 aided school teachers and 120 government teachers. Result shows that teachers who reported greater stress were less satisfied with teaching and reported greater frequency of absences. The teachers with greater number of total days absent were more likely to leave teaching (career intention) and less likely to take up a teaching career again (career commitment).

Qadimi, Ali and Praveena K.B (2013), investigated that teachers with higher age groups had higher burn out scores. In addition, study showed that there were no significant differences between age groups of school teachers with reference to their occupational stress.

Sapna and Gabha, Ved Prakash (2013), reported many factors of occupational stress in engineering colleges i.e. academic problem, fear, uncertainty, life causes, frustrations, pressures, environment, fatigue and overwork.

Rani and Singh (2012), conducted the comparative study of occupational stress of secondary school teachers in relation to their demographic variables i.e. gender, types of school and locality. Results showed that there was no significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers on gender, type of school and locality basis.

Lokanadha Reddy and Vijaya Anuradha, R. (2012), examined the occupational stress of 307 teachers working at higher secondary level in Vellore District in Tamil Nadu. They found that, around 88 percent of higher secondary teachers were experiencing moderate and high levels of occupational stress. To overcome it, they suggested some measures like improve self esteem, build self confidence, work on building emotional intelligence competencies, develop a good sense of humour, practice yoga and meditation,

Aftab, M. and Khatoon, T. (2012), found that nearly half of the secondary school teachers experience less stress towards their job and males displayed more occupational stress towards job than the females. Moreover the trained graduate teachers were found to have higher occupational stress than post graduate and untrained teachers. Teachers with an experience of 6 to 10 years face occupational stress the most and 0-5 years the least.

Kumar, D. and Deo, J.M. (2011), explored the different aspects of work life of college teachers in general and found out difference in perception of male and female as well as junior and senior teachers with regard to their responses. Their findings also revealed that junior college teachers experienced significantly more stress on most of the dimensions of stress in comparison to senior teachers.

Although many studies described major sources of stress among teachers, there were suggestions in earlier studies that researches on teacher stress should be replicated due to the local differences in socio-cultural and economic environment between two different regions. The present study explores the gender based occu-

pational stress of upper primary school teachers of Bhopal district who work under different socio-demographic conditions and stress causing dimensions.

### Statement of the Problem:

Analytical Study of Gender Based Occupational Stress in Upper Primary School Teachers of Bhopal District

### Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the level of occupational stress in Upper Primary School Teachers.
2. To find out the gender based level of occupational stress of Upper Primary Teachers.
3. To study the gender based level of occupational stress with respect to its different dimensions in Upper Primary School Teachers.

### METHOD:

The present work is a descriptive study in investigating whether the occupational stress faced by the school teachers differed significantly to their level of occupational stress based on their gender.

### Sample:

The sample consisted of 105 upper primary school teachers, selected from various government schools of Bhopal district, M.P., India, in which male and female teachers comprised of 65% and 45% of the total sample.

### Tools:

To obtain the data Teachers Occupational Stress Inventory (TOSI) was developed along with a general proforma by the investigator. The TOSI is a 30-item instrument and uses a five point Likert scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Teachers occupational stress score is calculated by adding the individual scores of all the items together whose possible range can be between 20-100. High score on the TOSI indicate a high level of stress among the teachers towards the occupation. Teachers stress levels are categorized into less, moderate and more level of stress in accordance with average stress scores

obtained. Occupational Stress Rating Scale was administered to the teachers according to their convenience to collect the data. The data were analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques.

### Statistical Techniques:

To analyze the data and interpret the data, the investigator used the following statistical techniques.

1. Mean and Standard Deviation
2. Percentage calculation

### RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS:

The mean and SD of occupational stress scores have been calculated for each teacher working in the upper primary schools. Based on mean and SD, the number and percentage of upper primary teachers falling under low, moderate and high occupational stress have been calculated and the same is presented in table-1.

**Table 1: The Distribution of Sample of Teachers According to the Level of Occupational Stress experienced by them**

Level of Occupational Stress	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	21	20	20
Moderate	69	66	84
High	20	19	100
Total	105	100	

From table 1 it may be noted that only about one-third of the responding teachers felt that the level of occupational stress experienced by them is low. Out of 105 upper primary school teachers, 66% teachers are showing moderate stress, while 20% and 21% teachers are under high and low occupational stress respectively.

The analysis is further done in upper primary teachers with respect to the specific personal, professional and situational variables to find the influence of various dimensions of occupational stress on them.

**Table 2: Levels of Occupational, Stress In Upper Primary School Teachers Based on Gender and Dimensions of Occupational Stress**

Teachers' Occupational Stress	Number and Percentage of teachers											
	Male N= 45						Female N=65					
	Low		Moderate		High		Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Overall	5	11.1	30	66.6	10	22.2	11	16.9	42	64.6	12	18.4
<b>Dimensions</b>												
Work Overload	4	8.8	31	68.8	10	22.2	9	13.8	43	66.1	13	20.0
Strenuous Working Conditions	5	11.1	28	62.2	12	26.6	10	15.3	40	61.5	15	23.0
Professional Distress	7	15.5	29	64.4	9	20.0	10	15.3	41	63.0	14	21.5
Impoverished Relations	8	17.7	27	60.0	10	22.2	7	10.7	42	66.1	16	24.6
Role Conflict	5	11.1	29	64.4	11	24.4	9	13.8	41	63.0	15	23.0

From table-2 it is clear that, out of 45 upper primary male teachers, 30 (66.6%) are showing moderate stress, while 10 (22.2%) and 5 (11.1%) teachers are under high and low stress. Similarly, 42 female teachers are moderately stressed (64.6%), while 12(18.4%) and 11 (16.9%) are under high and low stress.

Under the dimension- Work Overload, 31 (68.8%) male teachers are experiencing moderate stress, while 10 (22.2%) and 4 (8.8%) are in the extreme ends of high and low stress. In case of female teachers 43(66.1%) are moderately stressed, which is followed by 13(20%) and 9 (13.8%) female teachers who are stressed at high and low level respectively. With respect to the occupational stress dimension – Work Overload, it is clear that, the long working hours and expectations to do more work in too little time, large class size with students of diverse needs and taking responsibilities for the activities of others are some of the major stressors causing high level of stress among the upper primary teachers. Similar results have also been reported by Taris et al. (2001) and Gillespie et al. (2001).

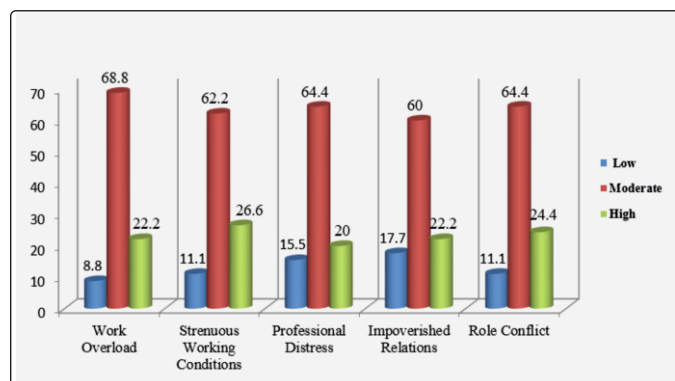
In the case of dimension Strenuous Working Conditions, the male teachers with moderate, high and low stress are 28 (62.2%), 12(26.6%) and 5 (11.1%) in number respectively. Similarly, the female teachers with moderate, high and low stress are 40(61.5%), 15 (23%) and 10 (15.3%) in number respectively. The reason for experiencing this stress may be attributed to the fact that most of the government upper primary schools are devoid of even basic facilities for teaching learning process and the teachers have to work under such environmental conditions that are stressful. The stresses due to Strenuous Working Conditions in teachers are also reported earlier by Kayastha et. al., (2013), and Bhatia (2008).

With respect to the dimensions – Professional Distress, 29 (64.4%) male and 41 (63%) female teachers are falling under moderate stress, while 9 (20%) male and 14 (21.5 %) female teachers are having high stress and, 7 (15.5%) male and 10 (15.3%) female teachers are showing low stress respectively. This type of stress is prevalent in upper primary teachers due to unavailability of resources and unfavorable conditions prevailing in these schools which hampers the teachers in the smooth execution of their duties. Similar reports have also been reported by O'Connor (2001). (Figure 1 and 2).

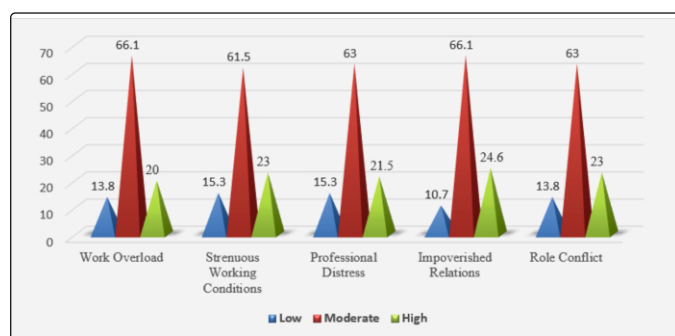
When the dimension- Impoverished Relations is considered, it was found that male 27 ( 60%) and 42 (64.6%) female teachers are experiencing moderate level of stress, followed by 10 (22.2%) male and 16(24.6%) female teachers with high stress and 8 (17.7%) male teachers and 7 (10.7%) female teachers with low stress. This is because when a teacher shares relations with his/her colleagues, it may sometimes result into adverse situations either professionally or personally which develops negativity and stress in teachers, which has also been reported earlier by Ekundayo and Kolawole (2013).

With the dimension- Role Conflict , it was found that male 29 ( 64.4%) and 41 (63%) female teachers are experiencing moderate level of stress, followed by 11 (24.4%) male and 15(23%) female teachers with high stress and 5 (11.1%) male teachers and 9 (13.8%) female teachers with low stress. Teachers develop role conflict stress in them because generally inappropriate, in compatible and inconsistent demands are placed on them. This gives rise to anger and discouragement in many teachers. Sometimes, teachers are also given responsibility to maintain discipline in the class while they are not given authority to do so (Sutton, 1984).

From table 2 it is also clear that the male teachers experienced overall stress (22.2%), which is more than female teachers (18.4%). It has also been reported earlier by Aftab and Khatoon (2012), Anbuchelvan (2010), Chopra and Gartia (2009), Brember et al., (2002), Gursel et al., (2002). The male teachers also experienced high stress with work overload (22.2%), strenuous working conditions (26.6%) and role conflict (24.4%) dimensions of stress which are 2.2%, 3.6% and 1.4% higher than female teachers. When stress dimensions in female teachers is considered they are found to be highly stressed with impoverished relations (24.6%) and professional distress (21.5%) which are 2.4% and 1.4% higher than male teachers. (Figure 1 and 2).



**Figure 1: The level of occupational stress in male teachers with its different dimensions**



**Figure 2: The level of occupational stress in female teachers with its different dimensions**

## CONCLUSION:

Elementary teachers have been entrusted with the important job of providing a foundation for their students' educational journey, but stress in teaching profession restrains the quality of the teachers and the same creates a misery in their minds. From the results it was found that, around 69 percent of upper primary teachers are experiencing moderate and 20 percent are experiencing high levels of occupational stress. In the present study, both male and female teachers were found to be stressed due to work overload, strenuous working conditions, professional distress, impoverished relations and role conflict. Their stress status ranged from low to high levels depending on situational conditions, however, male teachers were found to be more stressed than female teachers. All these sources of teachers stress erodes the peacefulness in the mind and life of teachers. They exert negative effects on their work performance, besides resulting in physiological and psychological distress. The results also depicts that male teachers are more stressed with work overload, strenuous working conditions and role conflict dimensions while female teachers are more stressed with impoverished relations and professional distress dimensions of occupational stress.

## Implications of the study:

Stress affects the efficiency of the individual. During the initial induction period many teachers begin to realize that helping boys and girls become secondary to administrative pressures, poor secondary to administrative pressures, poor classroom conditions, critical parents and disruptive and disrespectful students. These conditions are intensified by feelings of frustration and anger which gives rise to stress condition. So, there is a need to provide proper conducive environment and support to teachers to maintain individual stress at their workplace. There is also an urgent need for recognizing and identifying the major stressors in teachers and then strengthening and reinforcing teachers' self-confidence and positive attitude, and weakening the stress creating factors.

Several implications for the school administrators, school authorities, management committees, policy makers, educationists, psychologists, student-teachers and future researchers may be drawn from the research findings of the present study, with regard to occupational stress of teachers' in upper primary schools of India.

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